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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (06/24): PRISONER RELEASES LEAD
NEWS

Main Stories:

Al-Ayyam leads with and Al-Quds front pages wire reports about Israeli Radio announcing on June 23 that Israeli Defense Minister Barak has authorized the construction of 300 new houses in the Jewish settlement of Telmon in the northern West Bank. The construction will connect the settlement to a nearby outpost. To make the connection, a "huge number" of acres of Palestinian owned land will be "confiscated," according to coverage. State Department Spokesman Kelly is quoted from recent daily briefings reiterating that the U.S. position on settlement expansion is clear: The U.S. objects to any expansion of settlements, including natural growth.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida and Al-Quds lead with a WAFA story on the Israeli Minister of Interior's June 23 unannounced visit to the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, "under heavy protection by Israeli military." Palestinian Authority Minister of Jerusalem Affairs Abdul Qader called the visit, "provocative" and noted that, "Israel bears responsibility of the repercussions of this visit," according to coverage.

The release of Hamas leader Dwayk on June 23 after three years in Israeli jail is front page news in all dailies. Front pages also carry photos of Dwayk. Abbas told press that he welcomed Dwayk's release and hoped to see all Palestinian prisoners released, according to reporting. Dwayk noted to press that Palestinian prisoners are drafting a proposal that will end internal division and called on Fatah and Hamas to release all political prisoners from West Bank and Gaza jails. Israeli authorities also released Fatah leader Jamal Howel on June 23 after seven and a half years in an Israeli jail, according to coverage.

Al Quds and Al-Ayyam front page coverage on Palestinian Authority

President (PA) Abbas opening the 37th Fatah Revolutionary Council session on June 23 at the PA Presidency compound in Ramallah. In his opening remarks, Abbas noted that all parties must respect Roadmap obligations in order to reach a regional peace settlement in the region that will end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Abbas again praised President Obama's Cairo speech and called on all parties to take advantage of U.S. engagement in the Middle East peace process, reporting notes.

All front pages report on Egyptian President Mubarak's meeting with Russian President Medvedev in Cairo on June 23. The two leaders reiterated their support for holding an international Middle East peace conference before the end of the year. Medvedev also reiterated that Russia will exert every effort to launch peace negotiations in the Middle East.

All front pages report on Hamas and Israel denying that there has been any movement on negotiations for a prisoners' exchange deal, calling such news, "rumors."
WALLES